DOCUMENT RESUME

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ABSTRACT

Pacific Resources for Education and Learning has embarked on a journey to build literacy-focused high-performing learning communities--defining high-performing learning communities as organizations that have: shared vision; challenging curriculum aligned to instruction and assessment measures; a culture of continuous learning and improvement; parents and community as partners in the learning process; and supportive school structure. Pacific educators have identified these three critical issues: reading, assessment and accountability, and professional development. Goals are that children will be reading independently by Grade 3; schools and communities will have better information about how well students are learning; and teachers and administrators will improve their teaching and learning skills by focusing on student achievement. Noting that creating high-performing learning communities takes time and collaboration, this brochure describes results, relationships, and process. (NKA)

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Building Literacy-Focused, High-Performing Learning Communities

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Building a High-Performing Learning Community is like going on an ocean voyage . . .

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Join us in our journey to build literacy-focused High-Performing Learning Communities. Research defines High-Performing Learning Communities as organizations that have:

- Shared vision
- Challenging curriculum: aligned to quality instruction and multiple assessment measures
- A collaborative culture of continuous learning and improvement
- Parent and community as partners in the learning process
- Supportive school structure that includes:
  - Strong leadership
  - Accountability systems
  - Increased time for instruction and for professional dialogue
  - Safe and orderly environments that allow students to focus on learning.

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Pacific educators have identified these three critical educational issues:

The issues are:	Our goals are:
▪ Reading	▪ Children will be reading independently by grade 3.
▪ Assessment and Accountability	▪ Schools and communities will have better information about how well students are learning.
▪ Professional Development	▪ Teachers and administrators will improve their teaching and learning skills by focusing on student achievement.

Results

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Creating High-Performing Learning Communities takes time and collaboration.

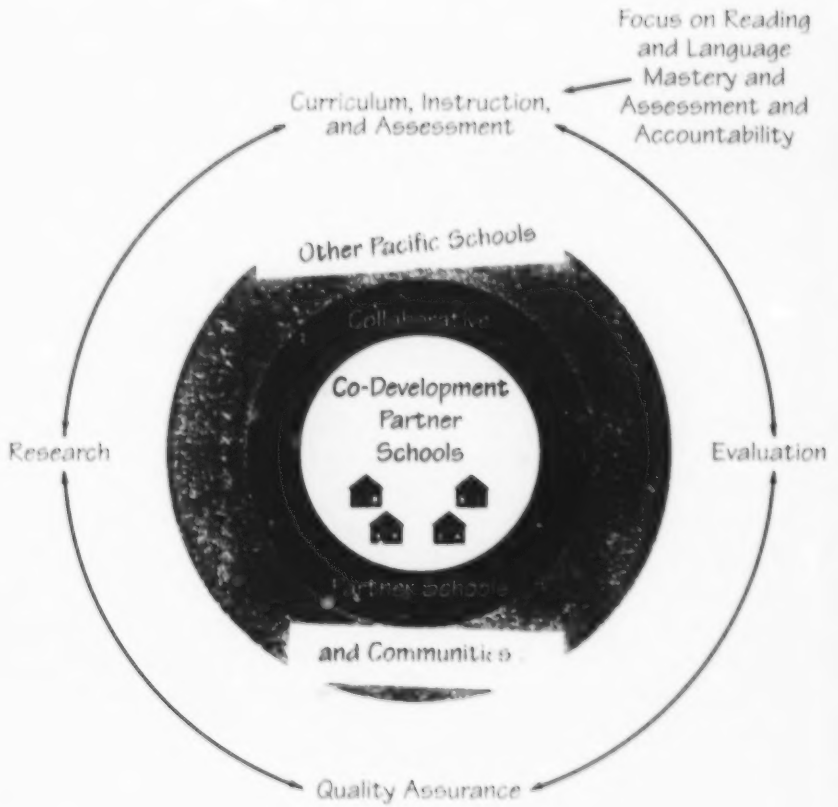
We will work intensively with a small number of Co-Development Partner schools to discover:

- What's in place
- Where we are
- What's working
- What steps we can take
- How we can be sure the community is involved.

This will be a development process between the school and PREL.

We will take what we learn and apply it to other Collaborative Partner schools. Together we will identify what works and what needs to be changed.

Through reflection and dialogue, we will gain a greater understanding of the process and share it with schools throughout the Pacific.



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Our working relationship will be a partnership based on the 3Rs:

Respect:

- for each other
- for students, school, and community
- for the cultures we work in

Roles:

- sharing talents and strengths
- being learners and teachers in the process
- being willing to try new things and to see a different perspective

Responsibilities:

- receptiveness to learning
- responsibility for making a difference
- effecting change for improved student learning.

Relationships

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Teaching Learning Cycle

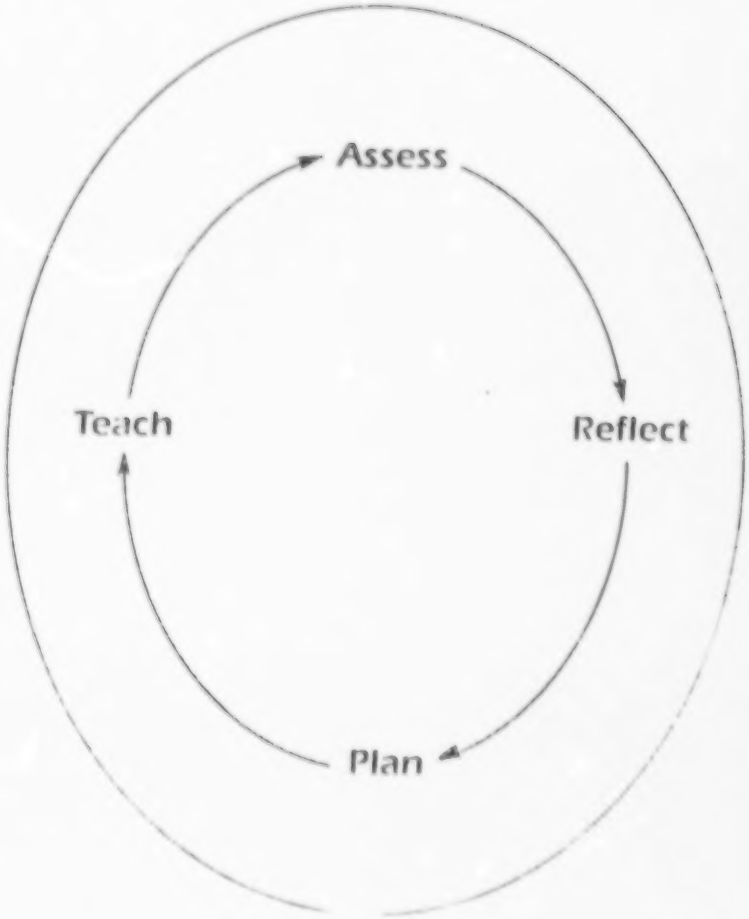
We have adapted the Teaching Learning Cycle, which is based on best practices in literacy education, to fit the needs of the Pacific region.

The process includes:

- **assessing** your current practices and collecting data,
- **reflecting** on the data to determine your next steps,
- **planning** based on what the data tells you, and
- **teaching** – taking action.

The process takes you from where you are to an improved practice and continues to inform you along the way.

This Teaching Learning Cycle can be used as a tool to improve reading instruction, as well as school-wide practices.



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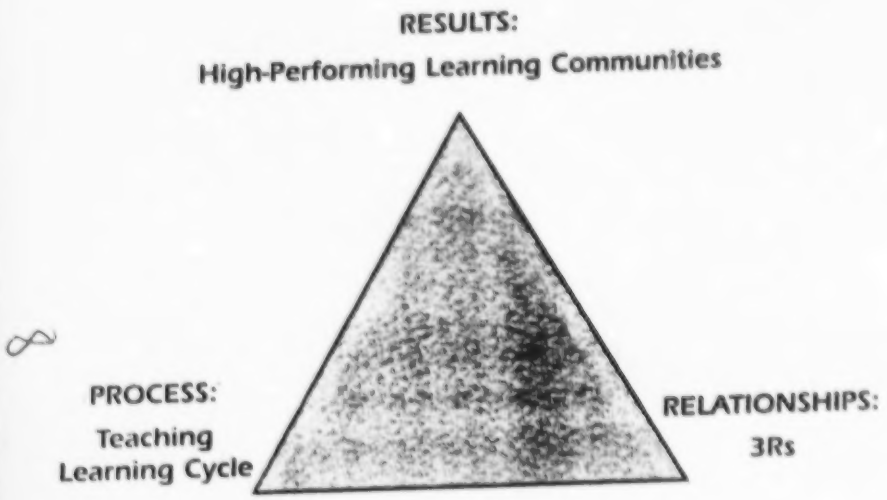
To be successful, we will focus on three major components:



Benefits:

- Students will improve reading achievement.
- Teachers will improve instruction and assessment in reading through sustained professional development and involvement in current research.
- Schools will receive external support through networking opportunities.
- Schools will participate in a multi-year comprehensive school improvement process.
- A variety of professional development activities will take place, some during school time (in-class demonstrations, modeling, coaching, learning teams) and some during non-school hours (summer institutes, workshops, conferences, etc.)
- Reading frameworks, materials, and assessments specific to school site will be developed.
- New and varied teaching, assessment, and reporting strategies will be implemented.
- Colleagues, partners, and community members will collaborate extensively.

Process

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Building a High-Performing Learning Community is like going on an ocean voyage . . .

In a speech given at the 1998 Pacific Educational Conference, Master Navigator Nainoa Thompson shared some of the wisdom he gained from his mentors and his voyaging experiences. To paraphrase his words:

A navigator must have a very clear vision of his destination and why he is going there. The vision must be simple enough so that it can be shared with everyone in the community and should be a reflection of the community's values.

The voyage begins with the building of a canoe. This collaborative effort becomes the vehicle that pulls the community together. As a result of planning, building the canoe, preparing for the voyage, and actually sailing towards the destination, a new community arises with shared values and a common vision.

There are many challenges during the voyage as well as many different routes that may be taken. It is important that a navigator never lose sight of the vision during these difficult times for it is the vision that will guide him.

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